



High School Completion Program

MANUAL

SECTION ONE

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I. What is the High School Completion Program (HSCP)?

In 2006, the Vermont Legislature established the HSCP to provide out-of-school youth, ages 16-21 inclusive, with educational services of the scope and rigor needed for the attainment of a high school diploma. This program allows a student, in collaboration with the AEL provider and high school, to create an individual graduation education plan that offers engaging and effective learning opportunities to meet the needs of the individual.

While a student's transcript is used as a baseline for service planning, the HSCP was not intended to be a traditional credit-based credential. Graduation education plans in this program are based on the individual student's skills, needs and goals.

What does HSCP mean for the High School Plan Manager?

- Development of a variety of local network resources
- A flexible, creative approach to plan development
- An emphasis on individual goal-setting and post-diploma planning
- A strong working relationship with high school personnel

What does HSCP mean for the students?

- Minimum assessment result of NRS level 3 in math, reading and language
- Commitment and self-motivation
- Access to a wide range of local community resources
- Individualized educational planning
- Funding for most services

II. How does the HSCP work?

The AEL provider is responsible for the program and for managing individual plans. Local high schools and the AEL provider, in partnership with the student, develop and agree to individual plans. Both the high school and the AEL provider, along with other resources, may be responsible for services within an individual plan.

Eligible youth may enter the program through many doors. The high school may counsel a young person who has left school to enter the program or the AEL provider may counsel eligible youth that the HSCP is an appropriate alternative for continued learning. In addition, a wide variety of community organizations that work with unenrolled youth may be a first point of contact for the program.

A full array of educational services may be included in the graduation education plan. All types of planned learning opportunities such as tutoring, courses, workshops, work-based and service learning projects, mentoring and internships that focus on secondary level academic and technical or occupational skill development can be included in a graduation education plan.

Local High Schools:

- Identify youth eligible for the program
- Participate in the development of graduation education plan
- Make typical services such as courses, counseling or extra-curricular activities available to participating youth
- Determine the graduation requirements for each participant
- Assess evidence of completion of plan requirements
- Create transcript and award the diploma

AEL Providers:

- Identify youth eligible for the program
- Participate in the development of graduation education plan
- Provide educational services
- Engage and contract with other providers for services as appropriate to the plan
- Manage and coordinate implementation of each plan
- Provide student advocacy, support and guidance throughout the process
- Manage student records and data entry required for reimbursements
- Maintain fiscal account records for funding and expenditure
- Act as the primary communicator with local high schools

III. Creating the Graduation Education Plan:

"Each graduation education plan must identify a challenging and engaging array of learning opportunities and assessments that align with the life goals of the student and increase student engagement and retention. These students have already disconnected from school; it will take creative approaches to learning to get them re-engaged with their education."

Vermont Department of Education, Act 176 High School Completion Program Guidelines (August 2006)

The re-engagement of young people with their education can happen in many ways and requires answering a number of questions, such as:

- What are the barriers that have impacted previous educational experiences?
- What are the options for reconnecting the young person?
- Would this young person be served better by placement in Job Corps or the Adult Diploma Program, re-enrolling in high school, or obtaining the GED certificate and immediately transitioning to college?
- Do the results of skills assessments show foundation gaps that should be addressed before proceeding?

Once it is clear that the High School Completion Program and the young person are a good fit, work begins on the development of a personal graduation education plan. Keep in mind that the deepest involvement of young people in planning their education will yield the richest results. Plans need to be innovative and resourceful to achieve success.

Initial Meeting of HSCP Plan Manager and Student:

This meeting follows the completion of AEL enrollment and assessment. The seven items to be addressed are outlined in the HSCP Checklist on pages 11 and 12.

The most important task is setting goals. During this process, the participant, with the guidance and assistance of the HSCP Plan Manager, begins the process of defining the short- and long-term goals that will form the foundation for the graduation education plan. See the Personal Graduation Education Plan instruction guide at the end of this section for specific steps (**Appendix A**).

Services with Other Service Providers:

The HSCP Plan Manager must be able to identify a challenging and engaging array of learning opportunities and assessments that align with the life goals of each participant. The Plan Manager needs to be familiar with the wide range of services available to participants in a specific region. Some of our partners will be obvious -- high schools, technical centers, the Community College of Vermont and all members of Learning Works are "approved providers." The list of approved providers as of September 4, 2007 is in **Appendix B**. See **Appendix C** for the form to apply to be an approved provider. Parent/Child Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation services, the Department of Labor and other government funded and not-for-profit agencies, especially those focused on healthy youth development, can certainly play a part in graduation education plans.

Our neighborhoods are full of learning opportunities. Vermont has many art, music and dance schools. Individuals in every town are willing to share skills and mentor young people. Employers are experienced in providing work-based learning experiences for youth. Additionally, the Internet has exploded with coursework of all kinds. The provider "Ed2Go" alone offers hundreds of courses through Vermont technical centers at reasonable prices. The Contract for Services form can be found in **Appendix D**.

Local resources vary with regions. The challenge is to match those resources with the individual participant's goals and the criteria of the high school. The following chart shows examples of potential providers by goal and is meant to be a launching point.

Learning Goal:	Examples of Potential Service Providers:
Improve math skills in preparation for a career in health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring through a Learning Works Center • Math course at the local high school • One or more courses through Ed2Go (available through the tech centers) or another online provider • Instruction through a Parent Child Center • CCV Course
Get started with employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making it Work modules overseen by MIW program or AEL provider • Department of Labor apprenticeship • Vocational Rehabilitation contract • ADP project "Getting A Job" • Career Center placement • One or more courses through Ed2Go
Learn to manage stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoga course through community provider • Stress management course through a local hospital • Counseling through youth services agency • Online offerings in time management, holistic health and healing, assertiveness • Addiction rehabilitation center program
Explore the Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open studio series at local school • CCV course • Class at the local high school • Placement with an art mentor • Community workshops • Library or museum offerings

Off-site Placements:

When a plan includes off-site placement for services, there are a number of required steps that the HSCP Plan Manager must take in order to ensure a safe and high quality educational experience. See the “Off-site Placement” checklist (**Appendix E**).

Modifying the Plan:

It is important to remember that each personal graduation education plan is a living document. Any changes must be discussed with and approved by all plan partners. Documentation of all signatories’ approval of the modified plan will be kept in the participant’s file (**Appendix F**). This documentation may include the following.

- a new plan form signed by all parties
- initials of all plan partners on changed sections of the plan
- emails from plan partners agreeing to changes

Obstacles to Plan Creation:

Change of Venue: There may be situations in which a particular young person and a particular high school are not able to work together to develop a graduation education plan. Some youth, especially those who have moved recently, may prefer to work with a high school different from the one in their town of residence. In such a case, the participant may request a “change of venue” to another high school. The Waiver Request for Assigned High School form (**Appendix G**) must be completed and placed in the participant’s file. If either the original or proposed high school declines the waiver request, it may be forwarded to the Commissioner of Education for consideration.

Challenge to Process: If a participant does not agree with the high school’s plan and does not wish a change of venue, it is the participant’s responsibility to address the issues through the local school process, usually by meeting with school administrators or the school board. The AEL provider may support the participant in this process but will not initiate it.

Accommodations:

Learning Works is committed to providing support services that are in keeping with our mission and values and in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Therefore, Centers will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations when it can be demonstrated that doing so would not fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity being provided. It is the participant's responsibility to request accommodations and to provide the necessary documentation in support of the request. See **Appendix H** for the Request for Accommodations.

Forms and Paperwork:

Once the Personal Graduation Education Plan has been signed by all partners, the Plan Manager must submit the HSCP Special Group Enrollment form. ***It is critical that the special group enrollment date match the earliest date of services provided under the plan*** (after the completion of initial registration and assessment). See **Appendix I** for a copy of the form.

IV. HSCP Checklist:

I. AEL Enrollment & Initial Assessment Complete

- ❑ Orientation and Registration completed
- ❑ Baseline Assessments completed
- ❑ File transferred to HSCP Plan Manager

II. Plan Creation (HSCP Plan Manager)

- ❑ Initial meeting with student
 - Review Student Program Guide
 - Transcript review (obtain from high school)
 - Verification of withdrawal from High School
 - Goal Setting
 - Plan outline
 - Request for Release of Confidential Information signed
 - Authorization to Release Confidential Information signed
- ❑ Additional assessment/diagnostics (if needed)
- ❑ Personal Graduation Education Plan development begins
 - Potential service providers identified
 - Draft plan shared with all parties
 - Change of Venue requested (if necessary)
- ❑ Personal Graduation Education Plan signed by:
 - Student
 - Parent/Guardian (if student is under 18)
 - High School
 - AEL Provider
- ❑ Special Group Enrollment Form completed and submitted for entry
(See **Appendix I**)

III. Implementation (HSCP Plan Manager and Plan Partners)

- ❑ Modifications made (as and only if needed)
 - Plan partners notified
 - Documentation of agreement to modify on file
- ❑ Goal completion documentation in file (as goals are completed)
- ❑ Plan Completed
 - Plan partners notified
 - Plan completion letter sent to high school
- ❑ Transcript received and in student file
- ❑ Final data entry and services billing completed

V. Data Tracking and Billing:

When the graduation education plan is signed, reimbursement occurs quarterly. The actual date that the plan is signed triggers two reimbursable services that are automatic in Data Works: Graduation Plan Development and the first quarter of Graduation Education Plan Management. All other services must be entered in Data Works through a manual data entry invoicing process.

Prior to actual invoicing, all services must be verified and documented in the student file. HSCP Quarterly Service Reimbursement forms are available in Data Works under “Documentation” and the Appendices of Section Two. The forms are to document services provided by the AEL Provider, High School Plan Partner, Approved Provider, or Other Provider.

The AEL provider is responsible for distributing these forms to all service providers that will be reimbursed for services including the plan partner high school. The AEL provider is also responsible for collecting these forms and verifying or documenting services prior to presenting them for invoicing.

All services provided by AEL for HSCP must be entered into Data Works in the same way as any other AEL service in other programs. HSCP participant data must be entered in Data Works as close to the end of the quarter as possible. The verification process cannot begin until all student service data are entered into Data Works. The last billing date is the final date services can be entered for reimbursement.

The HSCP Plan Manager is responsible for running a HSCP AEL Services report at the end of the quarter for each participant and presenting that document with the AEL Quarterly service form for invoicing. A sample HSCP AEL Services report is included.

VI. Plan Completion:

Upon completion of all plan requirements, the Center's HSCP Plan Manager will send a completion notification to the local high school. While the needs of individual high schools will vary and many high schools may require more supporting documentation, the following information must be included:

- Affirmative statement of plan completion
- List of each goal/requirement included in the plan and evidence of how the goal or requirement was met
- Declarative statement that a transcript is to be completed and a diploma awarded

Examples:

Grad Plan requirement	Comment	Provider	Completion
Core Academics: Reading	Demonstration of success measured by official GED test score of at least 450	Vermont Adult Learning	Test Date 02/05/07 Score: 550
Core Academics: Writing	To be satisfied by successful completion of "Intro to College Studies"	CCV	Completed 05/11/07 Course Grade: B+
Independent Learning Project: Art	To be satisfied by production of a music CD of original writing and singing	Self-guided (Vermont Adult Learning oversight)	Produced CD: 4/01/07 Copy on file at VAL
Work-based Learning	Measured by attendance log; employer performance evaluation	Local Employer (VAL oversight)	Attended: 02/03/07 – 05/12/07 Performance evaluation on file

Once this information has been shared with the local high school, it is the responsibility of the high school to generate a transcript and diploma for the participant.

The AEL provider must keep a copy of the transcript in the HSCP participant's permanent file.

Each high school will have its own practices regarding participation in its graduation ceremony. In addition to any high school ceremony, the AEL provider may have a regional graduation ceremony.